FIFTY YEARS

ZEPHANIAH W. PEASE

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FIFTY YEARS

on

THE MORNING MERCURY

NEW BEDFORD,
MASS.

1880 — 1930

A REMINISCENCE

by

ZEPHANIAH W. PEASE

A GROUP OF NEWSPAPER MEN IN 1884.

Front row, left to right: Zephaniah W. Pease, New Bedford Mercury; Captain A. J. Kenealy, New York Herald; Charles H. Montague, Boston Globe, afterwards city editor and author. Rear row: Henry H. Krehbiel, musical critic, New York Tribune; Edwin Stearns, Boston Globe; John Gilpin, society editor New York Herald.

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EDITOR HAS SERVED THE MERCURY FIFTY YEARS TODAY

Zephaniah W. Pease's employment on this newspaper covers a span of years in which New Bedford, the first whaling port in the world, became the first city in the United States in the manufacture of fine cotton goods --- Recollections, Comparisons and Reflections

By ZEPHANIAH W. PEASE.

A small diary with a red cover has lain in a drawer in my desk for the best part of a lifetime. It is a part of the Lavender of the past. On September 15, 1880, fifty years ago today, I made this entry.

"Went to The Mercury office, for good I trust, today. Morton and Coombs have left."

When I wrote I had joined the Mercury, "for good I trust." I was expressing an aspiration that has been fulfilled more completely than I could have expected in reason.

The day I commenced my service on The Mercury, the late William L. Sayer, who was the editor talked to me of what this newspaper meant to him and his associates, and I remember plainly that he said to me with pride in his voice, "I have worked on the Mercury for twelve years." And I recall the impression that this made on a youth. Twelve years seemed a lifetime and I wondered if I would ever work in one place such an eternally long time as twelve years. And I have worked for the Mercury fifty years—half a century. That was a long time ago and a long way to have come.

For fourteen years I was a reporter. Then in 1894 I was made editor and for thirty-six years I have held this position. And so I have become an Ancient of Days. A statistician might be interested to know how many thousands of columns I have written in the last fifty years of my life. How many millions of words! I do not dare to think about it. I shrink from considering that for generations I have been spreading on these printed pages, day in and day out, year in and year out, decades in and decades out, words and thoughts. Ink has rushed through my arteries and coursed through my veins, entering my soul and possessing me to transform reflections into type. How tired you must be of me, of my stories and my opinions. Then why you may say, do you make anything of this occasion and amplify the record.

It is, of course, that garrulity comes with age. So indulge me in the release of the memory that this anniversary day drags in. It is a very unusual experience. I have gathered, that a newspaper man has served one newspaper for such a span of years. And I have loved the Mercury as if it were a thing of flesh and blood.

How It Happened.

It is common that the routine of office work is interrupted by the appearance of an eager young man or woman who wishes to know how to get into newspaper work. In my own case it was a matter of chance. It was neither impressive nor spectacular like the introduction by Pendennis. We remember

that Warrington, the Bohemian, had used the word "we" and Pendennis asked, "Who are 'we'?" "They were passing through the Strand as they talked," writes Thackeray, "and by a newspaper office which was lighted and bright. Reporters were coming out of the place or rushing into it from cabs —there were lamps burning in the editor's room and above, where the compositors were at work, the windows of the building were in a blaze of gas. 'Look at that, Pen,' Warrington said. 'There she is, the great Engine. She never sleeps. She has Ambassadors in every quarter of the world—her couriers upon every road. Her officers march along with armies and her envoys walk into statesmen's cabinets. They are ubiquitous. Yonder general has an agent at this minute giving bribes at Madrid and another inspecting the price of potatoes in Covent Garden. Look! here comes the Foreign Express galloping in. They will be able to give news to Downing Street tomorrow—funds will rise or fall, fortunes be made or lost, Lord B will get up and holding the papers in his hand and seeing the noble Marquis in his place, will make a great speech—and Mr. Doolan will be called away from his supper at the Back Kitchen for he is a foreign subeditor and sees the mail on the newspaper sheet before he goes to his own."

I had no such introduction. I was fitting for college with no aim in view. Certainly I had not the least thought that I was a potential newspaper man. Yet I had always been in touch with a literary life. My father started a business career in the office of Richmond & Wood, New Bedford merchants, was invalided and consigned to a quiet life. For many years he was inactive and became a student of literature. He had the facility to memorize and could and did quote inexhaustively. He could recite entire acts of Shakespeare even from the least known of the plays, and could do the same thing with other favorites, Samuel Johnson, Borrow Kingsley, Johnson, Dickens and the philosophers and the poets. He wrote special articles for the Standard, was clever in writing humorous verse and in 1876, when the Mercury was bought by Booth, Chase and Sayer, my father was for a short time an assistant editor of the Mercury. If he could have had my opportunity I am sure he would have made better use of it.

My father died the year I graduated from the High school and this ended the idea that I would go to college. Meanwhile, through the association with my father, I had acquired that special familiarity with literature that I might never have obtained in a university. I had never contemplated that it would be of any practical service to me.

At about this time an afternoon newspaper was started in Fall River, the Daily Record, of which, I imagine, very few Fall River people have heard. One of the publishers had an acquaintance with a former teacher in New Bedford and he asked her to recommend a boy who could be used in the editorial room. For some reason I never appreciated, although she once told me it was because of a school composition she said she remembered, she proposed me for the job. I went to Fall River, commuting on the train, and did little things under the direction of Henry Seavey, who was an English newspaper man of local fame in Fall River, for many years a correspondent of the Providence Journal.

The Record lasted but a short time. I do not think my boyhood connection had anything to do with its fate for I was of no importance whatever. On leaving, Mr. Seavey handed me a letter of recommendation which said I had an unusual sense of the relative value of news. When I left I had no thought of looking for newspaper work or using my letter.

But in the summer of 1880, the Mercury was looking for someone to help out in the vacation season. There were two reporters on the Mercury then, Nathaniel J. Morton and George C. Coombs. Coombs was away and because I was known to the Mercury owners having been about the building while my father was employed in the editorial room, and because I had had the little experience on the Fall River newspaper, I was asked to work for a week. This was September 1 and a political campaign was in progress. I reported a few political speeches and drove in a landau to Marion, one afternoon, with the late Weston Howland, Captain James C. Stafford and Henry Field Jr.,

where that which I recorded as the first Democratic rally in Marion was held. At the end of the week my job was over, and again I anticipated my career as a newspaper man was closed. On his return from his vacation Coombs left the Mercury to go to work for Benjamin Tucker on his Review. Then on the 15th. I was reemployed and taken into a world of police courts and adventures. And that explains the entry in the Diary—"for good I trust." And I pray it has been, in some measure, for good accomplishment.

An Old Newspaper Office.

The old Mercury office, where I commenced work as a reporter, and where I wrote for a period of 36 years, was located at the southwest corner of Union and Second streets. The editorial and reporters' room was in the southeast corner of the building. It had been dismantled to a degree since the day when I first became familiar with it, back in 1876, when my father was employed there. Fessenden & Baker, former publishers, had removed their possessions.

I hold in my memory that ancient editorial room with its literary atmosphere. It was before the day when a newspaper office was as much like a machine shop or a factory as anything else. Those were the days when there was significance in the designation of the editor's room as a "sanctum." The earlier publishers of the Mercury kept all the books sent for review since the days when Lindsey started publication in 1807, and the furniture was the same. The walls of the room were shelved to the ceiling. The room was like an old library with thousands of volumes, most of them choice and beautifully bound editions. This gave the color of old oriental rugs to the walls. There were heavy mahogany tables and desks. Two of the desks were of unusual design. They were carried from pillar to post when the Mercury moved on. They hogged in the middle and the legs were broken. A few years ago they were given to me. They were restored and are now in my home where they are treasured for their association with the journalists of the antique day —the Lindseys, Charles T. Congdon, William Ellery Channing, and their followers to the present day all of whom wrote at these desks.

There was no machniery in the building excepting the printing press on the first floor. The typewriter was unknown. In passing I might say I am, perhaps the only living newspaper man who never used a typewriter. Every word of copy and every letter I have written in the half century, has been in long hand. The composing room was in the front of the building. The building was lighted with gas. The typesetters of that period were highly well informed. They did not hesitate to take to task a careless writer who made a slip in grammar or who made a mistake or omission in writing the middle name of the townspeople.

There was an architectural secret about the old building no one ever fathomed. To make room we were eternally removing posts that held up the attic floor. In the end the last support was taken out and as far as we could see, the third floor was suspended between earth and heaven, like Mohammed's coffin, with no visible support.

There were plenty of legends concerning the typesetters who worked at the case, the tramp printers who were an institution of the old days. The ancient pressman Revere Lindsey, a relative of the founders, was the embodiment of tradition. The press was slow. The outside pages were run through in the afternoon and the news pages at three or four o'clock in the morning. The issuing of a weekly published in connection with the daily was a ceremony that involved labor of the entire editorial and reportorial force in folding papers, addressing them and wrapping them. Meanwhile the business manager, Stephen W. Booth, would walk the floor impatiently, snapping at the pressman, repeating every week the same observation, "Revere, it seems to be a bigger job to get out this weekly, than it does to get out the New York Herald."

The Old Town.

I wish I could reconstruct for you the city as it was the morning I started work. It would be something like looking at the old prints by William A. Wall, once discarded so contemptuously from the walls of the homes, later to be bought at fancy prices and restored to a place of honor. Such a place

the picture of the old town with its mature and mellow charm holds in my recollection as I look back through the veil, over the confused present, back through the rosy mist of distance and long ago. The great fortunes made in whaling on all the seas of earth had permitted men and women of fortune and taste to indulge their spacious fancies and create a city, suggestive of a great tradition. Stately mansions set back from the streets, surrounded by extensive lawns and old-fashioned and opulent gardens, with flower beds bordered with box and arbors overgrown with roses. Everywhere was the suggestion of caste and aloofness. A walk through the long avenues, even those like Acushnet avenue from Union to Rockland streets, now given over in large part to shops and tenements, was like a walk through the broad aisle of a great cathedral, the suggestion coming from the arched vault formed by the beautiful and benign elms that crowded into a shade. There were lindens, too, sweet with blossoms, and horse chestnuts candelabra-wise, proffering the passer-by their tapering upright cones of congregated blossoms. Such was the beauty that inspired Melville and Washington Irving to record. "All things in order stood, a haunt of ancient Peace."

The population of the city in 1880 when I commenced my service, was but 26,848. There were but two cotton mills in the city, the Wamsutta built in 1847, and the Potomska built in 1871. Clark's Point was covered with woods and pasture. Around it was the boulevard of which the city was so proud, and another favorite drive was through Acushnet avenue, around the Head of the River, down the Fairhaven side and across the primitive bridge. Acushnet avenue was lined with great estates of which but one is left, Brooklawn, typical of them all. In late afternoon it was the diversion of the townspeople to drive in their staid equipages. The influence of the Society of Friends that dominated everything, would not permit the millionaires of the town to make a show of turnouts such as the rich of no greater fortunes, flaunted on Bellevue avenue in Newport. But as Melville wrote, "the women of New Bedford, they bloom like their own red roses. But roses only bloom in summer, whereas the fine carnation of their cheeks is perennial as sunlight in the seventh heavens." Perhaps Melville peeked under the Quaker bonnets. In 1880, although many young women dressed in a subdued way, there was no lack of beauty to be observed. The very beautiful Jennings sisters were so superlatively handsome that they were famous at the period when as a reporter I was supposed to take notice. There was Fanny, who was the widow of Nathaniel S. Cannon; Melissa, and Helen, the latter the widow of William O. Brownell Jr. Helen had a stage career later. This trio gave a touch of color to the afternoon parade, sometimes driving in a phaeton with a yellow canopy.

The distractions of that day were few. There was no means for getting about. The pleasant places that are now reached by motor so easily were remote and inaccessible excepting for the wealthy. We take the automobile for granted now. There are a few ancients who regret the passing of the buggy and the old slow pensive ways of life but we read an expression by a writer in a newspaper the other day of one who remembered the feel of a horse's nose when you put your hand over his nostrils to make him take the bit. But was life really a pleasure? he asked. There were long days with breadth and depth and peace in them, but the reflection came to him as it does to us, would we not be terribly unhappy behind a horse trotting so slowly on the road today, with all the shiny motor cars passing you—passing—passing—eternally passing, like the years.

The so-called "business center" would appear a somnolent quarter today. It was generally esteemed to apply to Purchase street, between Union and William, and Union street from Purchase to Fifth, now Pleasant street. There was a line of small stores on each side of Purchase street, many little shops where on the shelves behind the counter were stock goods, calicos, silesia and cambrie for dress linings, pieces of black silk and woolen dress goods, spool cotton and silk, yarn and worsted—all stock stuff. There were very few made-to-wear dresses on sale anywhere. Women wore black silk for best and it was still a matter of discussion at the "sew-

ing society" meetings whether the quality of Eddy's black silk material, or Whiting's, was the better. There were numerous men's tailor shops for while men's ready-made clothing was available, it was as a rule only the poorer class that bought it. A good made-to-order man's suit could be bought round-about thirty-five or forty dollars. McIntyre was regarded generally as the most fashionable but other tailors had a following. Incidentally for the sake of the record, it might be stated that New Bedford was probably the first city in the country to make-up and keep on sale in the shops of the outfitters, ready made clothing. It was designed for the sailors on our whalers to meet the exigency of the men arriving from long voyagers, usually four years in length, who demanded clothes, for shore wear. Some of this clothing was carried in "slop-chests" on the whalers. It was designated "slop-clothes" and the term was used in derision to describe coarse and ill fitting suits.

The electric light had not been invented. The street lights were gas and gasoline and were extinguished at 1 o'clock in the morning. I used to leave the brightly lighted office and grope home in the utter blackness, feeling my way often, by running my hand along the fences. There were a few telephones but not enough to save the reporter journeys afoot. The telephone exchange was on the top floor of Liberty Hall building. The lone night operator, with small pay, did not take his responsibility very seriously. After the theater at night. I often climbed the stairs, routed out the operator who had plugged out the entire telephone system of the city, and ran the exchange for fun. It may be that thereby I am the dean of telephone operators in the city. I have only to look in at the door of the telephone exchange of the present day to realize how the city has grown.

There were no electric cars. I rode on the trolley car that made its first experimental trip from the center of the city to Rural Cemetery. The induction made the telephones useless. That had to be overcome. The terminus of the horse car line was at the Orphan's Home on Cove street. Ultimately the rival street railway companies combined, the Union absorbing the Acushnet company. Then it was that the stranger riding from the depot heard the cry of the conductor so full of dismal suggestion—"Change cars for the Cemetery! This car for the Orphan's Home!" A depressing choice of destinations. There was bitter opposition to the trolley line because of the poles and wire construction. I went with a city council committee to Newton to look at a line that was testing storage batteries for power. Many of the city fathers wished to wait before granting the electric franchise until the storage battery car was perfected. It would have been a long and tedious wait. Further opposition was encountered from owners of horses who declared a horse would "never" get accustomed to meeting a trolley car.

I also went with a group of business men to Fall River to look at an electric light plant. Charles S. Kelley, Wendell H. Cobb, Morgan Rotch and Frederick S. Potter were in the company as I remember. It was proposed to introduce the electric light here. The group found the bulbs strange. The opinion was expressed that there would be a demand to change the styles.

I have mentioned the depot. It was the old North Depot on Pearl street. The architecture was Egyptian for some strange reason and the entrance, whcih had four pillars originally, reproduced the entrance to the Catacombs. It was admired when it was built in 1840. The Boston Atlas said it was "odd and appropriate." We do not know in what manner it was appropriate. It seemed in passing the portals, one was going to his doom. There were so many gibes at it in the early 80's that the people were very sensitive about it. It was 1886 before it was removed. I printed the plans of the present station in the Mercury and the people were madder than before. They coveted a high building with a clock tower.

There was but one restaurant in the center of New Bedford when I became a reporter. It was kept by Wing and was in the basement of Liberty Hall. On nights when there was a play at the theater, it kept open, and it was the height of dissipation to repair to one of the stalls for an oyster stew. Later on Sherman kept this restaurant. Three meals a day were served for $4 a week for men and $3.50 a week for women.

It was years after before a night worker was afforded a place where he could eat at night.

At nine o'clock the city bell ringer Isaac Barnes, rang the curfew in the tower of the North Congregational church. It rang for fifteen minutes. Guests at the Parker House from out of town used to go to the doors to ask where was the fire. Lyceum concerts and others were suspended while the bell was ringing. In spite of protests it was years before the curfew was discontinued. The bell rang also at noon and at six o'clock in the evening. Clocks were not so common. Those who possessed them regulated their timepieces by the nine o'clock bell. But after agitation extending over many years, we parted with another tradition.

The town was full of churches and about all had steeples with bells to knoll people to church. St. Lawrence was the only Roman Catholic church in the city in 1880.

At the southwest corner of Purchase and William streets was an unusual drug store, established by William P. S. Cadwell. Frank R. Hadley ran it in 1880. It was the finest drug store in New England when it was built, the fixtures being of black walnut, still surviving in a south end drug store. Lawton's at the northwest corner of Purchase and Union streets displayed in the windows the large bottles of colored water, the old insignia of the Apothecary. Not many cigarettes were sold but one could buy a good cigar at the drug stores for five cents. We would like a Principe, please. At the southeast corner of Union and Fifth streets was a drug store in the regime of Henry W. Parker and Frank H. Kelley, the Kennel club, later the Dartmouth club was organized and still later, in the Higham epoch, another society was founded, The Order of Stove Boats.

The municipal offices were located on the first floor of the Free Public Library building which was then a part of what is now the Municipal building. The Library was on the second floor with a stairway entrance from William street. Later an addition was built and the entrance was from Pleasant street. On the first floor were the offices of the Mayor, the city clerk, city treasurer, city auditor and the board of assessors. There was no access to the library shelves, no books out for inspection. There was an area in the center surrounded with a wide shelf on which were available reviews and magazines. Books were delivered from a counter in the center. The books were all covered in brown paper to save the bindings. This was the first Free Public Library in Massachusetts to be supported by municipal appropriation. Immured in a corner room on the front was the librarian, Robert C. Ingraham, a man of profound knowledge of book lore. He held the position of librarian for nearly fifty years and it was due to his foresight that the library specialized in local history, whaling literature, genealogy and Quakerana, which has made this library distinguished among the great book collections of the country. In 1901 George H. Tripp succeeded him and he followed the Ingraham tradition in sympathy and maintained the high standard. In the long history of the Free Public Library there have been but two librarians. Also the bookstore of Sylvander Hutchinson was a rare institution.

The hotels were old fashioned and interesting. The Parker House had an atmosphere of substantiality and hospitality, due in part to its spaciousness and in larger part to the landlord, Holder M. Brownell, a picturesque Boniface as spacious as the house. He had flowing side whiskers, wore a frock coat of broadcloth, a vast shirt bosom of immaculate whiteness set forth by a cluster diamond pin. To complete the picture, nobody failed to notice on the portico a very large man of distinguished appearance, Charles E. Hawes, white moustached and resplendently attired. No stranger failed to ask who he was and expected to hear he was a general or an ambassador. He was merely a retired citizen of means but he was an imposing figure.

The Bancroft House had an interesting landlord—Frank C. Bancroft. He was the chief entreprenuer of the town —a deviser of sports. He organized the first professional baseball team in this city. Then came the skating rink. One was operated in Pierian Hall and later Bancroft built a large rink on County street. He organized the local branch of the Elks. In the last days of Liberty Hall, he ran a vaudeville show there. Then he went to Cincinnati to manage

a ball team and the city lost its most picturesque citizen. There were innumerable anecdotes in which he figured, but none had the full flavor of that extraordinary personality.

The livery stables constituted a forum of that day and the topics in the offices were not limited to horses. If one wished a line on the course of politics he could not ignore the livery stable. A precious few people will remember "Bill" Coffin, as much of a type as Tony Weller, who drove a hack. The subject of stables brings reminder that most of the doctors and some of the older lawyers drove about the city in two-wheeled gigs.

Fancy fruits, out of season, such as white grapes and bananas, were only sold in the center, at Giffords on Union street, Parkers and Brooks's on Purchase street and at Tucker and Cummings on William street. The one department store was that of Haskell & Tripp on the east side of Purchase street, at the corner of William.

There were three or four halls of entertainment in the center of the city. All the dramatic and musical entertainments were given in Liberty Hall at the corner of Purchase and William streets. I will refer to this again. The most popular hall for dancing was Mechanics Hall, on the north side of William street west of Liberty Hall. The hall was on the second floor of a wooden building over the store of the Union Boot & Shoe company. It was the armory of the City Guards at the time I came on the Mercury. It had a spring floor. The annual Assembly was held there. When dancing was in progress the doors and windows shook so that the noise could be heard a block away. Pierian Hall in the rear of Ricketson Block at the southwest corner of Union and Fourth streets was used for fairs, dances and amateur theatricals. City Hall, with a handsome, columned, Colonial interior, was used for public meetings, lectures, fairs and dancing and schools were held at Waverly Hall on Fourth street.

The banks and law and insurance offices had not deserted Water street when my reporting days began. In the low-ceilinged rooms, up one dingy, narrow flight of stairs, were the law offices where notables of the bar of by-gone years had received their maiden fees. A modern visitor would have missed the stenographers and typewriters. From these offices went forth a half dozen judges to dignify their high stations, members of Congress, three attorney generals and a governor of the commonwealth. Their students read Blackstone and when their seniors appeared before the final bar, took possession and the legal world went on as before. A faded and weather-worn collection of signs over dilapidated stairways and beneath chamber windows, bore distinguished names. They are gone now, along with most of those who occupied the rooms. "What a number of lights have gone out since that day. Well, friend, let us walk through the day, sober and sad, but friendly."

And finally we reach the water front, where a brave and unique industry had flourished. In the old counting houses of brick and granite, bookkeepers and merchants were closing their books. There were still scores of whaleships at the docks, dismantled, done and broken. They were swathed in canvas and cloth to keep the rays of the sun from opening their seams. On a winter's night the deserted wharves, and ships with their flapping shrouds, were ghostly. Most of these ships had sailed their last voyages. Few of them ever went down to the sea again.

Reportorial Days.

At the time I began my career as a reporter, the Mercury had employed two reporters, Morton and Coombs. Morton was an extremely brilliant man and at the very time I was employed to take the place of Coombs, the Boston Globe offered Morton a position on its staff and he left. It was never assumed a schoolboy was to fill these places. But I stuck. In the emergency Mr. Sayer not only wrote the editorials but reported important affairs and the city government. Under the circumstances I was assigned to do more important things than it was expected I would do, good experience for me though the quality of the newspaper must have suffered from my ignorance and lack of skill.

To return to the Diary. The day after the entry I have quoted, is this paragraph: "I go to work at 9 A. M. and get home anywhere between midnight

and 4 A. M." There are very few entries after that and I never kept another Diary for the obvious reason these hours of labor suggest—I never found time. The typesetters arrived in the office about noon and distributed type, and commenced to set at two o'clock in the afternoon and set until five. Then they distributed type and set from eight o'clock in the evening until three or later the next morning. It was necessary to have copy at noon, so the reporter had to cover day assignments as well as night. I reported the Third District court in the morning, Alanson Borden was the judge, then visited the mayor's office and other city offices to pick up what news might be available there, then went to the office to write the morning's developments. In the afternoon I toured the city afoot. One fixture was a visit to the offices of the whaling merchants, Jonathan Bournes, the Phillips's, the Wing's, Capt. William Lewis and others, to get the transactions in the oil market. There was much competition between the Standard and the Mercury over whaling news. I never got much of a thrill over the announcement of a sale of "300 barrels of sperm oil, for manufacture, on private terms"—once in a while the price was given—but I was assured it was important. At night I reported dinners, lectures, political meetings, torchlight processions and covered the police.

The chief reporter on the Standard was B. F. H. Reed. He was a big, whiskered man, known by everybody, a tireless man of profound information about everything. I bring him into this story because I wish to make acknowledgement of his great helpfulness to me. Whereas, as a competitor, I strove in my humble way to get ahead of him, he would go out of his way to guide my inexperienced activities. Presumably he did not think I was of enough consequence to fight. However that may be, he was most kind to me.

The proprietors of the Mercury were Stephen W. Booth, who was in charge of the business department, having been employed there before the acquisition of the newspaper, Warren E. Chase, who had worked on the Standard as typesetter and reporter and William L. Sayer, who had been a reporter on the Mercury and now became editor. Messrs. Chase and Sayer alternated at times in night duty. They worked very hard for they took over the ownership at an inauspicious time. Whaling was on the wane and the town seemed in process of decay.

At the beginning I was under Mr. Chase, a very energetic man who did not spare himself and I was too enthusiastic about my job to wish to be spared. But Mr. Chase had certain hobbies that I did not relish. Having done newspaper work in the epoch when whaling was the vital news, he continued to so regard it. The Mercury had a Block Island correspondent at that time who wired whenever a whaler was bound in and it would often happen that when the day's work seemed about done at midnight, Mr. Chase would despatch me down the river with Peter Nelson in a rowboat to see if I could find the whaler and get her report. I remember rowing with Nelson well out into the bay one night in pursuit of a light only to find it was a whaler that went out the day before, at anchor. Back at daylight. One winter night we made a fruitless trip with half a gale blowing and decided to tie up at government wharf at the end of Clark's Point and walk back. The boat crashed against the stone abutment, started leaking and we had a dangerous experience. It was not always warm in the old office on winter nights. Mr. Chase had a habit of taking a nap resting on a pile of newspapers on the floor, pulling newspapers over him for warmth. I still remember being startled one night by seeing the pile of papers move and an apparition break through.

Years and years of reporting! At the beginning I was every kind of a reporter. There could be very little supervision. I was young, and lacking in judgment. There are certain loyalties that all newspaper men exercise—loyalties to their newspapers above personal considerations, which they feel they must observe. But, on occasions I wrote thoughtlessly of people in those indiscreet years when I aspired to be smart, in a way I would not think of doing now.

I have been fifty years in writing the story of New Bedford and it would take fifty years to review it. There are two incidents of my reporting days that stand forth. I can remember vivid-

ly now, seeing in the doorway of the office Lieutenant Kennedy and Mr. Beckwith of the U. S. Revenue cutter Dexter. It was on a January night in 1884. I was just going out on an assignment. Lieutenant Kennedy said the Dexter had brought in some rescued people from the steamship City of Columbus, wrecked on Gay Head. Then came the story of that fearful tragedy that is so well remembered here. Day after day tugs and steamers brought in the dead who were taken to an improvised morgue where crowds of relatives attracted here from all over the country, gathered in the hope of finding their dead. On the deck of a steamer, one afternoon, I identified the body of Morton of the Mercury, who had been my predecessor on the newspaper. He had started south in search of health.

The disaster provided an experience that helped me to be a better reporter. That is why I include the reference in these annals. An unusual group of newspaper men came here to report the wreck, in part because of the business and social prominence of the men and women who lost their lives on that dreadful night of a sea tregady not approached until the loss of the Titanic many years after. Among the writers who came was Henry E. Krehbiel, musical critic of the New York Tribune, who ranked in fame with William Winter, the dramatic reviewer of that newspaper. Mr. Krehbiel was the most authoritative and distinguished musical critic in the country. He asked for this unusual assignment as a respite from the heavy work of the New York opera and concert season. He was as handsome as a minnesinger's dream of Siegfried. Then there was Capt. A. J. Kenealy of the New York Herald, an Englishman, author of books and stories of the sea, the brother of Mr. Kenealy the barrister who conducted the case of the Tichborne claimant, John Gilpin, society reporter of the New York Herald, Charles H. Montague of the Boston Globe, an author of popular novels at that period and Edwin Stearns. All now dead excepting Mr. Stearns.

This group took me into their company. A suite of rooms was taken at the old Parker House, a tug chartered, and for ten days we were inseperable. Each day the work was allotted to the six and each wrote his story in manifold. Each newspaper had the advantage of the work of the six men and neither man worked so laboriously. I will not forget those nights after the day's work was done. Mr. Krehbiel was a charming singer. He was making a study of native Indian and Negro melody for a book on Afro-American folk song, published later. He sang to us the primitive themes, emotional, tragic, pathetic and playful, with the strange variants of the minor scale. And he told us the fascinating story of Lafcadio Hearn whose biography he wrote. It was Hearn, with Dvorak the composer, who gave Krehbiel the impetus to study Creole and West Indian music.

This opportunity to work with accomplished journalists on a big news story and observe their methods, was of great value to me. The Mercury eclipsed all the local papers in the reports and I got a raise in pay.

It was many years after that I reported the Borden murder. This attracted to the city many celebrated newspaper men, Joseph Howard Jr. and Julian Ralph of the New York Sun being in the group. I was in the confidence of District Attorney Knowlton who tried the case, William H. Moody, later a justice of the United States Supreme court was associated with Mr. Knowlton during the final trial. Mr. Knowlton, who greatly regarded the impressions of newspaper men, asked me to come to his home every evening that I might tell him any suggestions I received from the trained newspaper observers, and I was present at all the conferences. The evidence of motive for the murder Mr. Knowlton always wished he might strengthen. He was persuaded, personally, it was because of a conversation between her father and Uncle John Morse, that Lizzie Borden committed the murder. Over and over he would say, "If only John Morse would testify what he and Andrew Borden talked about the night before the murder, the judy would know the motive." Mr. Sayer signed with my name the stories I wrote of the murder and the trial, the first time, I believe, anything I had written was thus identified.

I might write pages concerning politics and politicians. Many of the local political figures would be interesting to recall. When fall came lights would appear at night in the back part of

Henry J. Taylor's china store on Purchase street. George B. Richmond and Rufus A. Soule and Col. Samuel C. Hart would be there and we knew something was hatching. Then Charles S. Ashley loomed up. I can picture his appearance at a conference of the Temperance party held at the party headquarters on the main floor of Mechanics Hall. Rum always played a part in municipal politics. This generation need not think the prohibition issue is a new thing.

Mr. Ashley had been a common councilman and was seeking the party nomination as an alderman. Charles S. Ashley was a bull in Henry J. Taylor's china shop. The manipulators did not quite know what to do because it was revealed that Ashley was on the bond of a restaurant keeper who held a liquor license—L. D. Stevens. It was decided to summon Ashley before the full committee to examine him. I can see Ashley now as he strode down an aisle on the east side of the headquarters and into the presence of the committee. He wore a meat cutter's smock for he had been summoned from his market. Someone told him that some of the Temperance party had scruples on the ground that he was on the bond of the liquor dealer. Col. Hart was scrutinizing him coldly out of half closed eyes, an expression Col. Hart's acquaintances can remember. "Gentlemen," said Mr. Ashley, "I never tasted liquor in my life. Not a drop. How many of you can say that?" There was silence. Mr. Ashley was nominated later in the evening, and polled a larger vote on election day than any other candidate. He was in line for another office. I will not go into that, but I may add that it has been one of the fixtures of my newspaper life to write an editorial annually announcing his candidacy as Mayor of New Bedford and another of congratulation announcing his election.

A Call on the Police.

The reporter was, of course, a constant visitor at the police station. The police force at that time was the most unique that ever existed. I did not appreciate this until many years after. Then it dawned upon me that I had looked upon a tragic episode without the least recognition on my part.

In the golden age of whaling the whaling captain was a nabob. The aspiration of the youth of this neighborhood was to be a whaling captain. Boys "ran away to sea" with this object. On shore many captains wore broadcloth and fine linen and beaver hats and big watch fobs and lived in fine homes.

And quite suddenly the whaling captains found their occupation gone. Many of the most successful retired. Others with the perversity which possesses people to do things for which they are not fitted, bought farms, the last thing a deep water sailor might be expected to do. Whaling captains, unsuccessful in life ashore, were driven to new occupations.

The police force was the refuge of many. There was no civil service examination in this day. Places on the force went by political favor and there were many captains who took places as patrolmen. The station was in the old market place on Second street. There were cells on the ground floor and a lodging house for "tramps." This generation does not know the "tramp." They were an institution in the 80's. They turned up in the early evening, given hardbread and water, registered on a slate and put to bed in a bunk. And every night I asked the number and the next morning printed along with the brief local giving the thermometer at 2 o'clock in the morning on the north side of the Mercury office, the news, "Thirty lodgers in the Central station last night." Important, nevertheless as revealing economic conditions at the period.

On the main floor was the assembly room. A furnace pipe ran up the center of the room and around it was a railing of gas pipe. A dozen old whaling captains were on the second relief that was sent forth at 11 o'clock in the evening to remain on duty until daylight. The most inactive, hence the oldest, were on this relief. The ancient mariners commenced to arrive at about 9 o'clock, divested themselves of their coats, lighted their pipes, tipped back their chairs and sat with their feet on the railing.

Now here were men who were familiar with all the oceans of the earth—the Arctic, Antarctic, the isles of the south Seas, men who had contacts with all ports and all races and all

peoples, with civilized and cannibals. And all the brothers were Valiant. Here was a hero who was master of the Catalpa which rescued a group of Fenian prisoners from Australia in 1876, thereby creating for a time an international complication, here was the captain who had brought down the crews of many ships, crushed in the Arctic ice floes in 1871, here were captains whose ships had been burned by the Alabama and Shenandoah in the Civil war, men who had participated in hairbreath escapes, had taken disastrous chances and suffered distressful strokes.

Yet these captains talked very little. They sat and ruminated Occasionally they would quarrel a little and then something would come out. Each captain had something on the other. After an argument one would blurt out, "How about losing that whale down at New Zealand?" or "What about your crews deserting?"

But often they sat, brooding. And little wonder. These men had commanded ships and men and their destinies. And now, at the stroke of a gong, they must fall in line, count two's, and march out into the night, often the storm. I was beholding a tregedy.

There were plenty of smart officers. The Beau Brummell, was Joseph B. Wing. He was a cavalry man in the Civil war and always rode at the head of the processions of that day. He was always assigned to society events. If there was a society wedding without Lieut. Wing it wasn't "Society."

Captain Charles H. Robbins, an old whaleman, was ranking officer at the police station at this period and he was very good to the young reporter. There was also Billy, the police cat, who sharpened his claws on the Bible in the Assembly room, giving it the creditable appearance of much use. The last time I saw the Bible, which is still in existence, I found that Billy had clawed his way through to Exodus before he made his.

Every soul in the station that was familiar to me when I commenced my visits, has departed. The station house has gone, likewise Billy, Peloch and the whaling captains.

Dramatic Reviewing.

In the days of the New England circuit, everything that was best in the drama and light opera could be seen, in the course of the season, in New Bedford. Companies played but a few weeks in New York, then came to Boston for a week or two and then trouped over the one-night-stands.

Liberty Hall, rebuilt in 1864 after a fire, was for many years the largest and best-equipped theater in New England outside of Boston. It was on the second floor of a brick building at the northwest corner of Purchase and William streets, where the Merchant's bank is now located. It seated 1,200 people. The seats were wooden benches, like church pews. The stage was large, with a proscenium arch in which were two boxes, high up, with balustrade and draperies, for decoration rather than practical purposes. For a score years it was the only theater in New Bedford and it was so in the early years of my employment on the Mercury.

The place held deep fascination for me for it was there I saw a play for the first time—"Uncle Tom's Cabin." There was the usual supply of stock scenery to fit any play, woods, drawing rooms, dungeons, gardens, etc. There are few who will recall the drop curtain that represented the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli. There was a plateau on which stood a group of quaint people and it was the favorite speculation of audiences how they reached the top and how they would get down.

In this theater Charles Dickens read "The Christmas Carol." Here played Charlotte Cushman, Forrest, Booth, Jefferson, Mary Anderson, and the great actors of a later day.

Plays in those days disregarded the unities and there were several scenes in each act. If the action jumped from a palace to a jungle, it was no great distraction to an audience to see a woods scene vanish, a set of flats at the back representing an apartment slammed together with a bang and the side flats shoved in, when the actors appeared and the play proceeded.

It was a queer place. Because audiences were apt to be unruly, particularly in the gallery, it was esteemed wise to employ ushers who were officers of the law and they were in most instances deputy sheriffs or officers from the House of Correction, with badges of authority displayed conspicuously—very unlike the youthful ushers of the pres-

ent day who wear uniforms like birds of paradise.

When I started on the Mercury I spent much time around Liberty Hall. The theater was managed most economically. One night an usher stood in the back row and applauded a song whereupon an officer approached him and said, "I wish you wouldn't do that. It prolongs the performance and consumes the gas." There was a curious factotem—Ben Card. He set the first scene, took tickets for awhile, then went down and played the bass viol in the orchestra during the overture, slid down a stairway leading to the stage, came out and lighted the footlights, rang the bell to hoist the curtain and hoisted it himself. What would the theatrical unions, stage hands and musicians, say to that?

The "Grand Opera House" presently drove Liberty Hall to the wall. For awhile Mr. Sayer wrote the dramatic reviews. Then he turned the work over to me and I was very well hated for it. In those days the companies and plays were not managed by syndicates, but by individual owners who traveled with the company. We met the managers intimately, for they were anxious for good notices for the effect of business in neighboring towns. They often brought in the stars and leading members of the company. I remember a manager of "The World" introducing to me Edith Kingdon, who was to marry George Gould later, and appealing for a nice word for her as he was most interested to see that she should progress.

I had known Charles H. Hoyt as a newspaper man on the Boston Post. He came to New Bedford to rehearse his first success, "A Rag Baby" which created a sensation in a new form of music and comedy. As he had no prestige on the stage and the company was often rebelious over methods, he sought companionship and we were quite inseparable. Extraordinary successes followed and he amassed a great fortune. He was at the beginning a high principled, brilliant fellow. But success wrecked him. He became addicted to drugs. The last time I saw him was at the old Gilsey House in New York where he had asked to meet me. He was led into the hotel by an attendant, slumped onto a divan and was oblivious to everything about him. He died a few days after. So cracked a noble heart.

Denman Thompson, after his success in "The Old Homestead" came here to produce a play "Rich and Poor." It was an Irish comedy. I thought it was terrible and said so in the Mercury. Mr. Thompson came in the next day and said he agreed. The author sued Mr. Thompson and I was summoned to New York as a witness, staying with Mr. Thompson as his guest for several days. So commenced a long friendship.

In the Diary to which I referred, I find a few of the plays that came to New Bedford the first winter of my employment. They included "Fun no the Bristol," Chaufrau in "Kit the Arkansas Traveler, the Unknown," "Evangeline," "Fatinitza," Annie Pixley in "M'liss," "Humpty Dumpty," "The Rivals with Jefferson, Maurice Barrymore and Mrs. John Drew. "The Sorcerer" with the Boston-deal Opera Co., "The Tourists in a Pullman Palace Car," Willie Edouin in "Fun in a Photograph Gallery" and the comic opera "Boccacio."

This was the period of Gilbert & Sullivan. It is worth being an Ancient of Days to have lived during the vogue of Gilbert and Sullivan. It is one of my happiest memories of departed days.

The Old Order Changes.

Whaling agents in 1880 were persisting to keep the industry alive. There were still voyages for the sperm whale, for in spite of the substitution of petroleum oil for lighting purposes, sperm oil was still burned in lighthouses and used for lubrication.

The real activity was in Arctic whaling. Whalebone brought high prices. Women were wearing corsets then and whalebone was used in dresses. New Bedford commenced to equip whalers with steam engines and send them around to San Francisco, from whence they made summer voyages to the Arctic and on occasion, willy and nilly, wintering there. Here was a hazard of new fortunes. The captains and agents came home in fast trains to spend the winter, rolling in wealth. They raced sleighs on County street and spent profligately. In the spring there was a final ball at the Parker

House—a conivial night—with the dancing of the "Dartmouth Fore and After" as a distinctive climax. Then special trains bore them away to San Francisco. We will not go into the end of this flash of a revival of the industry. A pool put up the price of whalebone to $5 a pound, substitutes were found, and the styles of women changed. There is romance in the thought that such ventures of life and money were taken to contribute to the fashion of women. And New Bedford, in its present industry, is still a creature of the fashion.

The reporter began to get a different sort of assignment. He was going to the offices of the whaling agents, but not for oil markets. He was bringing back different sort of news. In 1881 he went to the office of John P. Knowles, and J. Frank Knowles told him he was to build a cotton mill, the Acushnet. Not long after Swift & Aiken announced they were closing their offices, shipping old models of whalers, ship's signals, prints and log books to the auction room and McCulloughs. William D. Howland was to use the counting rooms as offices for his yarn mill.

The old romantic industry was flying out of the window and manufacturing was coming in at the door.

In the next years mills were building on every hand. Owners of farms were selling land for mill sites, millions were being invested in corporations forming every few weeks, and the air was full of stories of great earnings. The population doubled twice in two decades and President Mellen of the New York, New Haven & Hartford railroad, was touring the West telling the people if they wished to look upon the fastest growing city in New England they must go to New Bedford. Haw dearly then we cherished the word "Progressive."

And the clock struck twelve twice in succession. New Bedford became the first city in the United States in the manufacture of fine cotton goods.

I Become An Editor.

In 1894 Mr. Sayer became the editor of The Evening Standard and I became the managing editor and editor of The Morning Mercury. Benjamin H. Anthony, William L. Sayer and George S. Fox were the owners at this time. The present owners of the Mercury are Benjamin H. Anthony, Gertrude B. Sayer, James T. Murray and Edmund Anthony. Arthur G. Luce entered the business office in the regime of Stephen W. Booth and then became business manager of the Mercury, a position he has held for many years. I owe much to the education I received under Mr. Sayer. He used beautifully wrought English but his power was moral and spiritual no less than intellectual. He had a way of getting at the real principles involved in the questions of the day. If the principle did not stand the test of common sense which Mr. Sayer applied with a brain well balanced above most, or square with the moral law, he showed it no mercy. It has been a difficult task to maintain the ideals set forth by Mr. Sayer, but the association was an inspiration to do one's honest best.

The Mercury was a newspaper of demeanour when I came to it. I have tried to preserve the background because the background of people and institutions is so important. If I have gone out of my way to present in season and out, references to local history, it is to hold us to that background of the glorious host of the founders of the city which we hail.

I have been favored with the fellowship and loyalty of a remarkable group of men who have worked with me to the end of maintaining the traditions of this newspaper. It has been good companionship with loyal workers.

And I wish to make tribute to the publishers. One often hears of the subservience that is demanded of editors to business considerations and of dictation to editors. Never in my experience has there been interference with me. I have been in disagreement with the publishers of this newspaper on questions of politics on many occasions but never a complaint has come from them. All they required of me was sincerity. I have given this in return and have written nothing in insincerity. I am deeply appreciative of the forbearance of the publishers and of the readers of the Mercury.

Soon after I became editor of the Mercury I was appointed Collector of Customs of the Port of New Bedford by President Cleveland, a position I held for five years, retaining the management of the Mercury. All experiences are of value to a newspaper man and I feel this was helpful in my career.

In 1907 the Mercury printed an edition in celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Mercury and E. P. Mitchell of the New York Sun wrote an editorial in which he said the Mercury was the most interesting newspaper printed in the United States on that day. I am glad to have held that honor if it was but for a day.

A pleasant experience was that of General Secretary of the Semi-Centennial celebration of the incorporation of New Bedford.

Older Editors.

The Mercury was founded in 1807 by Benjamin Lindsey, who was its first editor. In the 123 years of its existence it has had but eight editors, I think. This story has been written without any reference to files. If I had started to look over the files I would never have accomplished anything. I get so absorbed when I have occasion to look back at a newspaper file, that the day is done before I close the volume.

Benjamin Lindsey Sr. came here from Boston and interviewed a number of citizens regarding the prospect for a newspaper in New Bedford since the "Columbian Courier" had ceased to exist in 1805. Daniel Ricketson has left us a pen picture of the senior Lindsey. "His appearance was remarkably editorial," Ricketson wrote "but decidedly of the olden time, and, like his predecessor John Spooner, of the Franklin school of printers." He died in 1831 and his son continued the publication until 1861, when he was appointed United States consul at St. Catherine's, Brazil and sold the newspaper to Col. C. B. H. Fessenden and William G. Baker. Later Mr. Lindsey resigned his consulship and returned to this city to spend the remainder of his life in the quiet he craved, with a few companions of his youth, whom he loved and the fellowship with books. He lived at the southeast corner of South Sixth and Madison streets and left his home to the Unitarian church. He is buried at Stockbridge, Mass.

In the 1820's Mr. Lindsey employed Charles T. Congdon to do some editorial work. Congdon was later with Greeley on the New York Tribune. In 1855 William Ellery Channing of the Concord group of philosophers, the friend of Thoreau, was an editor of the Mercury for two years. Many of his poems were printed in the Mercury, some without title or signature. He wrote on a great variety of topics, ephemeral productions such as editors turn out.

The editorial page of the Mercury was highly distinguished under the regime of Fessenden and Baker. They assumed the publication on alternate days. The men were very different. Col. Fessenden was a dashing fellow, brisk and blunt. He never wrote an anaemic thing but preserved the salt and savor of the hard-hitting traditions of journalism. His political editorials were frankness undiluted.

Mr. Baker had good breeding and refinement and his writing was graced with an erudite hand. He wrote French verse, and had exceptional power of literary expression. In later life he walked the streets, with dignity. He dressed punctiliously wearing a silk hat, a frock coat, was always gloved and carried a cane.

Neither was an all-round newspaper man. They were interested in the literary side of newspaper work, and Mr. Sayer has written an entertaining incident of the way the system of alternate control under Fessenden and Baker, worked. Editorial articles did not often clash, because, by a tacit consent, Mr. Fessenden wrote all those which had to do with politics, and Mr. Baker those which dealt with more general and abstract topics. But there were some odd happenings in other ways. One of the most notable was in connection with the reporting of the famous Beecher-Tilton trial. Mr. Fessenden had been a college mate with Mr. Beecher, and was his strong friend and partison. He was intensely indignant at all the charges and insinuations concerning Mr. Beecher's character. The trial ran on for a long time, and was quite fully

reported by the Associated Press. Mr. Fessenden considered the testimony for the most part as scandalous, and on his night of duty would either suppress it altogether or condense it to a mere skeleton. What Mr. Baker thought about Mr. Beecher his associates never knew, but he had no qualms about printing the testimony, and on his nights it went into the paper in full. So we had the queer spectacle of an every other day report of one of the most sensational and absorbing trials this country has ever seen. Occasionally some other subject was treated in the same way, and both the partners appeared to take it as a matter of course. If they ever had any open disagreement concerning these matters, they so managed that none of their employes ever knew.

We Develop A Philosophy.

The editor has the daily task of expressing opinions of this and that, sometimes, maybe, on problems upon which he has no opinions whatever. But in fifty years of observation and thinking he should be able to devise a philosophy, or code, for better or worse. There was a time when this Ancient of Days had faith in laws, devices, candidates. I know if you remember, or look over files in the high and far-off times, you will find the editor was presenting certain formulas, a law for this or a law for that, or the assurance that if a certain candidate was elected to this or that office, the problems of the world would be settled. I do not think you will find much of that sort of thing in recent years.

In a democracy I do not think there can be government much better than that of the average of human material. Not that we must not have aspirations and ideals we are continually striving to reach. But we will not attain the millenium at the next election nor in months, nor in a lifetime. How many years? Well, a millenium is a thousand years. A thousand years, in the sight of the Creator, are as one. Yes we ought to be able to see improvement in a thousand years. Certainly we advanced in the last thousand.

A Final Word.

The question obtrudes as we reach the end of this internal monologue, What of the accomplishment? We recall the old ambition to help make this a larger city with a hundred thousand population, a great manufacturing city. In the fifty years that have passed the population is five times greater and has become the first city in the country in the manufacture of fine goods. Might we better have let sleeping dogs lie? Is New Bedford a better place to live with respect to the neighbors, and the general character of the population? Was it all futile? Is the city more attractive now that brick factories have replaced mansions and groves and fields? Are the people who invested the money made in the old industry richer in world's goods? And so on. Have we seemed to impart a nostalgic fragrance to the old days as if we were sorry we could not have let things stand still?

There was once a King in Jerusalem, the son of David. He made great works, he builded himself houses, he planted vineyards, he made gardens and orchards and planted trees in them of all kind of fruit, he made pools of water to water the wood that bringeth forth trees, he got him servants and maidens and had great possessions of large and small cattle above all that were before him and became great and increased more than were all before him in Jerusalem. Then he looked upon all the works that his hand had wrought and on the labor he had labored to do. And he sat in his arbour, beside his fish ponds and declared that it was all Vanity and vexation of spirit.

We sit in our arbour beside our fish pools this morning without such a thought. We know we only progress by constant striving, and that Humanity must not be allowed to settle down and just live.

The old King of Jerusalem summing it up declared all his days were sorrows. We prefer to adopt the wisdom of Mr. Petulengro—"Life is very sweet, Brother, who would wish to die?"

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

(New Bedford Evening Standard.)

The completion of 50 years of service with The Morning Mercury by its editor, Zephaniah W. Pease, is an event of interest outside the circle of readers of that paper, and, indeed, outside of the community itself. Fifty years is a goodish stretch of time. When Mr. Pease, a boy just out of school, joined The Mercury as a reporter in 1880, Rutherford B. Hayes was president of the United States, William T. Soule was mayor of New Bedford, the population of the city was a little over 26,000, and the great industrial expansion which so decidedly altered the character of the city was still to come. These points are mentioned to emphasize the long period of time during which Mr. Pease has left his impress upon New Bedford journalism, and the changed conditions with which, as an editor, he has had to deal. For 14 years a reporter, Mr. Pease in 1894 was called to the editorship, and since then the character of The Mercury has been molded, and its policies shaped, in accordance with his ideas of what a newspaper in a community like this should be.

How successful he has been in his life's work the present standing of The Mercury and Mr. Pease's own standing in the profession of journalism bear witness. Under his guidance the paper has wielded a strong influence in local affairs. The extent to which its editorials are quoted in other newspapers is an indication of their quality. A writer of rare charm, the master of a compelling style, he has found time to contribute, outside the columns of The Mercury, to the literature of New Bedford. The Catalpa Expedition was a noteworthy contribution to local history, a book for which there is still a demand. He is the author of a history of the city which, more than any other that has been written, reveals its character and individuality. In the editing of old diaries he has helped to make an imperishable record of the past. In short, Mr. Pease today is the community's leading historian and is so recognized beyond its confines.

The end of 50 years finds Mr. Pease still active in the direction of The Mercury, abreast of changing reader tastes and needs, keenly interested in all that concerns the welfare of the town, and ready to oppose what he regards as mischievous or to support what he regards as for its best interests with the same trenchant pen. The anniversary is one in which both he and the readers of The Mercury—not to mention the public as a whole—can take satisfaction. Among his associates in the newspaper field, who recognize him as the dean of the profession, who value his ideas on newspaper problems, who have been helped on countless occasions from his store of local knowledge and his shrewd estimate of men and events, the occasion inspires admiration of the fine service he has rendered and his devotion to high ideals of journalism, along with the friendliest wishes of future success.

(Boston Herald.)

On Sept. 15, 1880, 50 years ago last Monday, Zephaniah W. Pease made this brief entry in his little red-covered diary: "Went to The Mercury office for good I trust today." "For good," indeed, it proved. He is still with The New Bedford Mercury, the famous newspaper founded back in 1807. He is still going strong in what was the whaling metropolis which became in his own time the greatest cotton textile city in the world.

For 14 years he was a reporter for his paper; since 1894 he has been its editor. He celebrates the anniversary modestly enough with an article of 11 columns in the Monday edition. Having read the article in extenso we think that it well might have been twice as long. It is written out of a full memory, it refers to many interesting matters which held the attention of the world, and it has that reminiscing flavor that warms the heart of almost any reader who is not so young as to resent any backward looks.

Our neighbor does not say so, but we fancy he feels that "those were the happy days," the days when he worked all day and most of the night, when he was a full half of the entire reportorial staff, when he used to climb the stairs

to the telephone exchange and rout out an operator soundly sleeping and himself run the entire telephone system of the city for a while just for fun, perhaps also for news. On one of the old desks which he treasures now, William Ellery Channing used to produce copy. In those days New Bedford was a town suggestive of a great tradition, with stately mansions set back from tree-bordered streets and surrounded with old fashioned gardens. Young Pease made the first trip by trolley in the city, an experimental trip from the center to the cemetery, and the "induction made the telephone useless." Three meals a day cost $4 a week then, 50 cents less for ladies. The curfew used to ring for 15 minutes at 9 o'clock and Lyceum concerts suspended during that interval.

The genial editor of today has done in his time about everything that has to be done in a newspaper office, and he declares that he probably is the only living newspaper man who has never used a typewriter. We hope he will shun it for the next 50 years if it would affect his manner of writing.

(Brockton Enterprise.)

It's a long trek back to 1875. That year a youth with a fondness for printer's ink was setting type on the Nantucket Inquirer and Mirror, and among the exchanges that came to the office was one he learned to have a fondness for. It was the New Bedford Morning Mercury, much in demand for its shipping news. The youth has grown grown a lot older since then, but has never ceased to look upon the Mercury as an always welcome and entertaining friend. In its issue of September 15 there was a story that filled 10 columns and one reader, at least, would have been glad had it been twice or thrice as long. It was written by Zephaniah W. Pease, who has served the Mercury, as reporter and then editor, for a full 50 years, beginning in 1880, his service in the more responsible capacity covering the last 36 years. As a news gatherer he was assigned to get details of the sea tragedy in January, 1884, when the Savannah steamer City of Columbus was lost on a reef off Gay Head, in which work he met Boston and New York writers of seasoned experience and made fine friendships. Years after he reported the Borden murder trial, Fall River's never legally solved mystery. In between Mr. Pease as a young reporter learned to know police and political methods, hunted news about the dwindling whale industry then wrote about the cotton mills that were taking the place of shipping in giving employment to New Bedford people and earning dividends on local capital. But it has been since Mr. Pease became editor that his writings have reflected the man of kindly sympathies with the best in life, of seasoned information and mellowed outlook, one who loves to let his memory dwell upon men and manners of years agone while keeping pace with modern progress. The Mercury's editorial page reflects the personality of the man who makes it day after day with undiminished zest and gives it a flavor all his own. It has been told that Mr. Pease has never surrendered to the typewriter; that he puts up all his copy with pen or pencil, as in the good old days when compositors wrestled with the hen tracks put on paper by Horace Greeley. May it be many more fruitful years before he lays aside that pen for the last time!

(Providence Bulletin.)

This week Zephaniah W. Pease rounded out fifty years, first as a reporter on, later as editor of, the Morning Mercury of New Bedford. This is a most unusual record in a business where offices frequently change and the members, bitten by wanderlust, roam from city to city. It was a love for a literary life which led Mr. Pease, as it has led so many boys, into newspaper work, and it was the beauty of a city he remembered in its glory which held him to one spot. In his recollections, looking back over his life, Mr. Pease found it to be good. He knew New Bedford as the greatest whaling port in the world and he saw it transformed into an industrial city. He has been interpreter of the past to new generations growing up, preserving a romantic tradition in the midst of red mill chimneys. If there has been disillusionment in his days, it does not find its form in cynicism; his outlook is as youthful as it was when he first trudged the rounds as a reporter, and his hope for a better world is not dimmed. Regret that the charm of the past could not

be fixed may now and then creep over him, as over every man who has known quiet cities, but then the ever changing world is his business, and in it he has honorably toiled for fifty years.

(Springfield Republican.)

The chief value in the observance of anniversaries lies in the history which they recall—a statement which applies not only to our Massachusetts tercentenary, but to the pungent and colorful recollections printed during the week in the New Bedford Mercury by Zephaniah W. Pease, who became a reporter on that paper September 15, 1880, and for the past 36 years has been its editor. Few cities, certainly in the eastern states, have seen as much picturesque transition in the last half century as New Bedford. When Mr. Pease began as a reporter, the whaling industry, though past its prime, was still important and was yet to pass through a brief heyday of renewed affluence as, thanks to women's fashions, whalebone rather than oil became the object of the hunt for "Leviathan" in the Arctic waters of the Pacific, and as special trains carried prosperous whaling captains to and from the Pacific coast at the beginning and end of the whaling season.

Accustomed in the early days of his novitiate to be rowed out over rough seas to board an incoming whaler and get the first news of her voyage, it is no wonder that the able editor of the Mercury, insisting on the accuracy of his own columns, occasionally explodes at Massachusetts newspaper gatherings over the land-lubberly reports of youngsters who never learned a ship's rigging. But the story of New Bedford for the last 50 years, as Mr. Pease tells it, covers more than the transition from whaling days to those of a great textile industry and because it includes, among many other things, the transformation of social customs and modes and means of public entertainment, it is part of the common history of the time.

(New Bedford Times.)

In his uninterrupted length of service to the news and editorial readers of New Bedford, Mr. Pease may be said to exemplify the impressive continuity of the city itself in its traditions and in its industrial and mercantile import.

As we remarked at the time of Mr. Pease's trip to Europe some years ago, it had always seemed to us that he typified an exceptionally well-developed school of the Informative Editorial.

We would add at present that Mr. Pease's work stands in our opinion as one of the premier American examples of what would be styled in English journalism the newspaper's "leading article," erudite and well-rounded throughout.

We trust that Mr. Pease may continue his editorial endeavors for many and successful years!

(Fairhaven Star.)

Fifty years make up a period that is relatively long or short, but measured as individual human experience it seems quite a stretch. Mr. Z. W. Pease, editor of the Mercury, has been telling us about the half century he has put in on one job, and claims for himself a place among the Ancients. We have no disposition to deny him that honor, but if our reading of history and our observation of current happenings mean anything, it must be admitted that the Ancients of today are a far livelier lot than those of old. In the case of Mr. Pease we are reminded of the fetching advertisement of a commodity which is represented as having a very long record and is still going strong.

In his review of the half century he has spent on the Mercury Mr. Pease unfolds a panorama of men and events that is most interesting. Newspaper men are interesting, too. Those whose business it is to make daily record of the world's doings, and especially those who take to themselves the task of commenting on all sorts of human activities, inflicting their personal opinions on the rest of us and volunteering advice on about everything, are surely arrogating to themselves privileges which involve tremendous responsibility, because newspaper editors undoubtedly have much to do with shaping public opinion and thus influencing the general trend of affairs.

Editors and editorial writers are a queer lot, and intensive reading of their

product over a period of many years compels the conclusion that most of them are not much good. Some editorial writers of ability permit themselves to degenerate into mere propagandists, and eventually their treatment of any topic is ineffective because dominated by a particular obsession. Such editors find the root of all evil in that particular thing which they think they dislike intensely. Then there are the writers of manifestly meagre equipment whose objective is clearly the hope that they will be regarded as persons of vast erudition and unquestioned authority. These writers see in every controversial question a monster to be destroyed, and it is theirs to do or die. So they sally forth daily with frightful pens and booming phrases, breathing death and destruction, but their subject matter and argument are obscured by an egotism so rank as to be almost obscene, and readers who value their time soon tire of this kind of writing. Then there are the few editorial writers who possess the happy combination of adequate training, the capacity for correct observation, the willingness to face facts and to admit them, the rare gift of critical analysis, the faculty of clear expression, and above all, the honesty which prevails over personal preferences. It is in this latter group that Mr. Pease of the Mercury belongs. Instead of classifying him among the Ancients we would name him as one of the Elect.

The Mercury editorials make good reading because in most cases they deal with timely topics that concern all of us, and because they are written in a style that is matter-of-fact and at the same time fascinating. Our conception of a good editorial is one that leaves the reader in a mood for careful deliberation of the subject under discussion, and that has been our experience with the Mercury articles. Of course the Mercury editor does not shrink from controversy,—no editor does—but he presents his argument with fair logic and a reasonableness that is wholesomely persuasive.

Loyalty to good causes and their leaders has been amply demonstrated by Editor Pease. His natural admiration for great intellectual attainments and high ideals made Mr. Pease an ardent supporter of Woodrow Wilson. The Mercury was valiant in the defense of the war president until the end—and after. The tribute to President Wilson which appeared in the Mercury the morning following the death of the great statesman stands in our recollection as the finest specimen of editorial writing we have ever seen in any newspaper.

We call to mind another Mercury editorial of several years ago in which the Pease pen lashed out furiously at persons who had been guilty of flagrant mistreatment of a pet dog. The Mercury editor quite lost his temper, and after a vivid description of the incident in faultless even if very forceful English, wound up by characterizing the performance as "a damned cowardly thing to do." The wicked little adjective sparkled like a ruby in a setting of white gold, and that editorial registered beyond a doubt.

Mr. Pease communes with the Ancients, and we take great pleasure in reading his reminiscences, but we know of no editor who lives more thoroughly in the present or who seems to enjoy it more. The training Mr. Pease has had during the last half century should put him in good trim for the work ahead. Controversy over many things fills the air. Important things continue to happen, and some of them have happened this week. Big developments are looming in the years just before us, and writers of the ability and character of the Mercury editor will have rare opportunities. There are many of us who resent haranguing and who will not be compelled, but will willingly sit at the feet of one who has demonstrated his qualifications as a student of affairs. We so regard the editor of the Mercury. In extending congratulations to Mr. Pease on his splendid record of service we express the hope that we may have for many years the privilege of starting the day with his column in the Mercury.

(New York Herald-Tribune.)

In "The Morning Mercury" of New Bedford last Monday there appeared an article—it consumed an entire page and more—in which Mr. Zephaniah W. Pease reviewed the memories of the fifty years during which, as reporter and editor, he has served that paper. It is a pleasant record of a career as unusual in jour-

nalism as it would be in other work; and, more than that, it is a striking picture of how greatly within the space of only half a century American life has changed. On the day in September, 1880, that Mr. Pease began his work upon "The Mercury" (as its sole reporter) the campaign which elected Garfield to the Presidency was getting under way. New Bedford was watching the setting of the sun of its prosperity as a great whaling port, but the whale-oil fortunes survived to make it still a small city of millionaires.

Mr. Pease remembers its "stately mansions set back from the streets, surrounded by extensive lawns and old-fashioned and opulent gardens"; its grand ladies, their dress subdued to the Quaker proprieties, but not beyond "a phaeton with a yellow canopy" for driving in the afternoon promenade; and the green avenues through which the carriages rolled, where a walk was like walking "through the broad aisle of a great cathedral." Yet this city of wealth and caste had a business center that would "appear a somnolent quarter today." Its small shops sold "calicoes, silesia and cambric for dress linings, pieces of black silk and dress goods"; while New Bedford earned the distinction of being the first city of the country to sell ready-made clothes only because whaling crews back from four-year voyages had to have something they could step into the moment they came ashore.

"The distractions of that day were few," yet in the single theater (a second-story hall equipped with wooden benches) the people of New Bedford saw Charlotte Cushman, Forrest, Booth, Jefferson and Mary Anderson and heard Charles Dickens himself read "The Christmas Carol." There was but one restaurant in the city, and it offered to serve three meals a day at $4 a week for men and $3.50 for women; but along Water Street, "in the low-ceilinged rooms up one dingy, narrow flight of stairs" were law offices, whence eminent judges, members of Congress and Governors of the state had gone forth to their high tasks.

And finally Mr. Pease remembers the waterfront, where "scores' 'of whale ships lay dismantled and where, "in the old counting houses of brick and granite, bookkeepers and merchants were closing their books." One of Mr. Pease's early duties was still to pull down river in a rowboat to get the first report from incoming whalers. But then one day "Swift & Aiken announced they were closing their offices, shipping old models of whalers, ships' signals, prints and logbooks to the auction room. William D. Howland was to use the counting rooms as offices for his yarn mill." Next year "mills were building on every hand"; whale oil was dead, cotton had come, and "the population doubled twice in two decades."

Many people know New Bedford today; they can realize how different a place it is and appreciate how profoundly America, like New Bedford, has been transformed within half a century. It is a process not entirely without its regrets. One may congratulate Mr. Pease upon his anniversary and thank him, also, for the charm of this glimpse into a vanished past.

(The Vineyard Gazette.)

The culture, the accumulated tradition of a place depend upon factors which most of those who dwell there may never realize. Thus one of the priceless influences and possessions of a community, likewise one of the least tangible, comes and goes without the volition or even the understanding of the people who really are the community. They become proud of the individual flavor which their town possesses, boasting their culture when it is present, and dismayed when they become aware that it has crumbled.

This reflection is suggested by the fiftieth anniversary in the service of the Morning Mercury of that newspaper's editor, Zephaniah W. Pease. The retrospect with which Mr. Pease marked the occasion took the form of a fascinating reminiscence, extracts from which are reprinted in this issue of the Gazette because they relate to old days and old glories in which Martha's Vineyard shared. Mr. Pease's memoir makes it easy to understand how it is that New Bedford, a city strangely alien and heterogeneous, has preserved an unbroken tradition from whaling days, and how it happens to have today a local culture (there is no other word to describe it) envied of the thousands of cities without souls. The editor of The Morning Mercury must be credited with

a major part in this fruition of the community's spirit. For half a century he has been engaged, with that fine and remarkable instinct inseparably associated with able editors of the old school, in recording and interpreting the life of the city.

"I shrink from considering that for generations I have been spreading on these printed pages, day in and day out, year in and year out, decades in and decades out, words and thoughts. Ink has rushed through my arteries and coursed through my veins, entering my soul and possessing me to transform reflections into type," Mr. Pease writes. And this trail of ink, running back through decades and generations, marks the career of the city and the accumulation of the gold, grain by grain, which is New Bedford's culture. The justification of this editor's fifty years is too clear for any passerby to miss.

One speaks of him as an editor of the old school advisely, for only such an editor is always a contemporary. Editing of great dailies today is a form of merchandising, and editors drift rapidly on the roaring flood of the times and are quickly lost in the distance, like most other men. There is something about Mr. Pease's type of editor which enables them to stand still as history surges past them. They are always here and now, and with them is the accumulated observation and reflection of what they have seen and done.

(The Editor and Publisher.)

A classic bit of memory writing by one of the old masters of American journalism.

(Springfield Union.)

Fifty years of active service on an enterprising and growing newspaper in an enterprising and growing city is a record of which any newspaperman may be proud. This wholesome pride is reflected in the sketchy but intimate story of his newspaper career by Zephaniah W. Pease, editor of the New Bedford Mercury, which appeared in that newspaper Monday, exactly fifty years from the day on which the writer entered the employ of The Mercury as a reporter. That was the period when reporters often wore full beards and dressed in keeping with their hirsute adornments.

It was in the beginning of the Eighties, the queer decade in which a gradual shifting from the slower and more dignified manners and customs of Civil War period to the livelier fin de siecle gaiety that marked the Nineties, was making itself felt. The old order was changing in New Bedford, which had achieved importance as the greatest whaling port in the world.

Whale oil as an illuminant was being crowded out by kerosene and gas and cheaper substitutes for whalebone were being found. Besides, whales were getting scarcer and the famous fleets that sailed out of Buzzards Bay were diminishing in number. There were still the stately mansions of the whaling kings, but the fortunes made from whale oil were finding new fields of investment in the rapidly growing cotton industry, destined to bring about a five-fold increase in New Bedford's population in the ensuing half century.

In his first fourteen years with The Mercury as a reporter Mr. Pease saw these changes taking place and lived through many important events, in the chronicling of which he had an active part. Those were the horse and buggy days, long before the advent of the trolley, much longer before the introduction of the automobile. Even the telephone was still pretty much a novelty and rather sparingly used, and radio and airplanes undreamed of.

The reporter of those days was expected to possess an all-around versatility, which fitted him to be a dramatic critic or anything else. Highly amusing are Mr. Pease's recollections of the old-time plays and players who visited New Bedford and the theaters of that day. He describes one theater factotum, whose duties required him to set the first scene for the play, take tickets for a while at the door, play the bass viol in the orchestra during the overture, then slip back to the stage, light the footlights and hoist the curtain for the opening act.

Yet under just such conditions some of the greatest stage celebrities of the time—Forrest Booth, Mary Anderson, Charlotte Cushman, Joseph Jefferson and others—made their appearance in New Bedford and the great Charles Dickens read his "Christmas Carol"

there. Then came the Savoy operas, and Mr. Pease writes ::It is worth being an Ancient of Days to have lived during the Gilbert and Sullivan period." Surviving theatergoers of the Golden Nineties will bear him out in this.

Mr. Pease's fourteen years as a reporter have been followed by thirty-six years as editor of The Mercury, which under his able direction has taken a high place among the newspapers of New England. It has kept pace with the growth of the city and its growing importance as a great industrial center. While his mind dwells fondly on the past which is gone forever it also looks to the future with great hope and faith. He has seen many sweeping changes, nearly all for the better, and he knows that more are to come.

In his half century "in the harness" he has developed a philosophy, the nub of which is expressed by him as follows:

"In a democracy I do not think there can be government much better than that of the average of human material. Not that we must not have aspirations and ideals we are continually striving to reach. But we will not attain the millennium at the next election nor in a lifetime. How many years? Well, a millennium is a thousand years. A thousand years, in the sight of the Creator, are as one. Yes, we ought to see improvement in a thousand years. Certainly we advanced in the last thousand."

A bit of wisdom which ought not to be lost on the zealous and impatient souls who strive to make this a perfect world overnight. Our felicitations to The Mercury and to Editor Pease on his golden jubilee and may he have many happy returns of the day.

(Hartford Courant.)

To Mr. Zephaniah W. Pease, editor of the Morning Mercury of New Bedford, who has just completed fifty years of continuous service on that venerable newspaper, we extend our felicitations and best wishes. In an article reviewing this half century Mr. Pease notes that under the date of September 15, 1880, he made this entry in his diary: "Went to the Mercury office, for good I trust, today." As it has turned out, it was certainly for the good of the Mercury that he went there. Its pages bear the impress of his charming, yet forceful personality. During his reportorial days it was not unusual for him to begin work at 9 in the morning and quit at 4 the next morning. His habits of industry, his enthusiasm, his news sense and his facility of expression were rewarded by his appointment to the editorship of the Mercury in 1894, in which position he has exerted a strong and helpful influence.

As a result of fifty years of observation and thinking, Mr. Pease confesses to having developed a journalistic philosophy quite at variance with his earlier views. There was a time when he believed that if certain laws were enacted and certain candidates elected to office, the problems of the world would be settled. His conclusion now is that government cannot be much better in a democracy than the average of human material that comprises the population. Ideals and aspirations we must have, he says, and as the years move on it is possible to note some improvement in the general state of affairs, but scanning the horizon he can see no visible evidence of the millennium.

One of the durable satisfactions that Mr. Pease has found in his work is the consideration he has always received from the publishers of the Mercury. Not once during his long period of editorial service has the business office undertaken to dictate the attitude he should take on any public question. "All that was required of me," he says, "was sincerity." This requirement he has abundantly met, as the readers of the Mercury can testify. Whether his opinions have always set well or not, there has never been the slightest question in anybody's mind that they were the utterances of an intellectually honest man.

So to "Zeph" Pease, an ornament and a credit to New England journalism, we bow our acknowledgement and pay our deep respect.

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